

[<Back](#) [Print](#)

Yonkers Green Policy Task Force News Blast

Wednesday, July 29

Another Green Success!
Junk Your Junk Mail
EPA Grant News
The Leaf Blower Ban is Back
The GPTF Wants You!!!
Vest Pocket Park Update
To Recycle or Not to
Recycle...The Pizza Box
Mystery
Bottoms Up
Hello?
The Next GPTF Meeting is
Wed., August 5 at 6:30

[Sign Up](#)[SIGN-UP!](#)[Quick Links](#)

Another Green Success!



Yonkers Green Business Summit in June was a great success, drawing hundreds of environmentally- conscious business leaders to the Riverfront Library for the City's first summit.

The GPTF's booth was buzzing with people asking us all kinds of questions, from how to incorporate [LEED/Energy Star](#) building standards in their communities to asking for advice on establishing their own green task force.

Check out www.YouTube.com/Attainable Measure for summit videos.

Photo cap: GPTF Coordinator Laura Fahrenthold with committee member Mel Goldstein at the summit.

Junk Your Junk Mail



Hardly anyone likes receiving junk mail. Problem is, we are not fighting back hard enough by recycling what we receive or by

removing our names from the lists to begin with.

The GPTF found an [easy-to-use, comprehensive website](#) that will help you clear your mailbox once and for all. It took us a mere 12 minutes to fill out the forms.

Consider this:

- More than 100 million trees' worth of bulk mail arrive in American mail boxes each year - that's the equivalent of deforesting the entire Rocky Mountain National Park every four months. (New American Dream calculation from Conservatree and U.S. Forest Service statistics.)

- In 2005, 5.8 million tons of catalogs and other direct mailings ended up in the U.S. municipal solid waste stream - enough to fill over 450,000 garbage trucks. Parked bumper to bumper these garbage trucks would extend from Atlanta to Albuquerque. Less than 36% of this ad mail was recycled. (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

- The production and disposal of direct mail consumes more energy than 3 million cars. (New American Dream calculation from U.S. Department of Energy and the Paper Task Force statistics)

- Citizens and local governments spend hundreds of millions of dollars per year to collect and dispose of all the bulk mail that doesn't get recycled. (New American Dream estimate from EPA statistics)

EPA Grant News

GPTF members Molly Roffman and Loretta Miraglia have been hard at work with Anna Sollozzo of the Yonkers Board of Education's transportation department readying to install exhaust filters on school bus fleets serving Yonkers Public Schools as part of a \$300,000 [EPA grant](#) the Task Force won to reduce the amount of harmful pollutants spewed into the air by exhaust school buses.



The process, called [retr ofitting](#), will result in improved health and reduced environmental fallout by bus exhaust. The project is slated for completion no later than December, 2009.

The Task Force is also working with Anna to promote Yonkers laws that restrict bus and car idling by holding educational meetings for bus drivers and monitors to explain the laws and procedures. Hundreds of environmentally- motivated drivers have already taken the class and signed personal pledges not to idle while others are signing up for the September 16 class. (The bus monitor's class is August 31.)

Be on the lookout for our new NO IDLING signs that should be posted at all city schools by September. Both of these efforts will help improve Yonkers air quality near homes and schools where the lungs of Yonkers' youngest citizens are most vulnerable.

Interesting factoid: New York has the largest fleet of school busses in the nation with approximately 50,000 vehicles transporting more than 2.5 million pupils each day over 225 million miles annually.

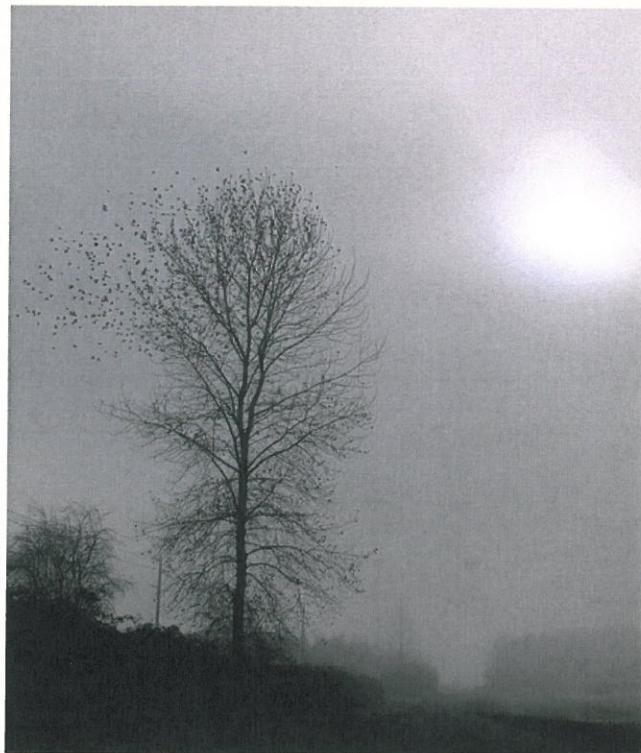
Photo cap: left to right: Molly Roffman, Anna Sollozzo and Loretta Miraglia.

The Leaf Blower Ban is Back

Yonkers is reinstating the city-wide seasonal leaf blower ban this Saturday, August 1. The ban had been temporarily lifted to help residents clean up after the freak storm on July 8.

Please be sure to remind your landscapers of the annual ban which runs from June 1 through September 30 to promote clean air quality. The ban applies to all residential and commercial property owners as well as landscaping companies. You can also forward this to your local friends and neighbors.

To report violators, call Code Enforcement at 914- 377-6888 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. If it's after 6 p.m. or on a weekend, call the Mayor's Action Center at 914- 377-HELP.



The GPTF Wants You!!!



The [GPTF](#) is looking for volunteers to spread the green gospel at the St. John's Farmer's Market in downtown Yonkers at Getty Square (1 Hudson Street) on Thursdays anytime between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. through November 19.

So far we have three committed volunteers but we need more. If interested, please email laura.f.ahrenthold@yonkersny.gov to sign up. Spanish speakers a big plus!

Vest Pocket Park Update

Say hello to part of [Groundwork Hudson Valley's](#) Green Team, a group of 17 Yonkers public school students who joined Groundwork USA's national program on a local level to work in community development.

This one group is hard at work beautifying Vest Pocket Park by the Yonkers Riverfront Library as part of the Green Policy Task Force's plan to refurbish the park for all to enjoy.



Other projects the Green Teams are tackling during their eight-week intensive summer work program include:

- Community gardening projects in neighborhoods and outdoor classrooms at schools such as Enrico Ferme
- Historic property plantings
- Clearing vacant lots on N. Broadway and 8 Orchard Street
- Surveying a 1.5 mile long stretch of the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail through identifying invasive species, garbage piles, uneven surfaces that impede biking and baby strolling, and more before organizing a community-wide volunteer clean up to be held August 8.
- Contributing to the Our Folks project to help our older citizens age in place by doing yard work and small outdoor repair projects.
- Organizing and running a bicycle rodeo (safety checks) at Culver Street Park on July 29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Staffing Groundwork's Science Barge

In addition working their regular paid hours, the teens volunteer an additional 40 hours of environmental service during the program. Most recently, they traveled to Castleton, Vermont to hike and do hands-on bridge and picnic table building projects on the Appalachian Trail with Curt Collier, deputy director for Groundwork USA and Hudson Valley.

"This is a tremendous program that gives the kids an opportunity to look at the environment as one collective whole," said Collier of the experience. "Now back home in Yonkers, they see themselves as advancing a much larger picture of what is being done to support the environment across the United States."

While the work can be challenging, especially on a hot summer day, Ramfis Cruz didn't seem fazed by the dirty sweat dripping down his face or the yellow jacket intent on dive bombing his head.

"This job has changed the way I look at things," he said. "I feel honored to be able to see what the environment needs and to work with my own hands to make changes that will make a difference now and for the future."

Photo cap: left to right: Roger Osario, Gabby Addane, Ramfis Cruz, Seth Danso, Brian Ponte.

To Recycle or Not to Recycle...The Pizza Box Mystery



When asked whether or not it is truly ok to recycle the pizza box, many people did not know for sure.

One Yonkers resident said absolutely not.

"Everybody knows that pizza boxes have no business in the recycling bin," said Joe Dowe when approached last week. "You can recycle the beer cans that go with it though."

Susan DeNovalis didn't agree... or did she?

"I think you can," she said, sensing a trick question. "At least our family does. Is that right?"

Ladies and Gentlemen, the undersigned members of the Green Policy Task Force felt it was their green civic duty to answer the question once and for all. They turned Ken Greehan, manager of the Yonkers Recycling Center who said.... drum roll please... "Yes and No."

What?

While you'd be hard pressed to find a pizza box that was not made of recyclable corrugated cardboard these days, it's not the box that poses the dilemma. It's what inside the box that counts.

"The thing makes pizza boxes non-recyclable is not the box but the leftover grease and cheese from pizza because it soils the cardboard," explained Greehan. "Food is the four letter word in the paper recycling process."

What happens is grease and food from pizza boxes causes an oil "slick" that paper fibers can't separate from during the paper pulping process. This is precisely why other food related paper items such as used paper plates, used napkins, used paper towels, etc. are not recyclable. They contaminate the whole recycling batch.

The easiest remedy is to cut or tear out the tainted sections of your pizza boxes and recycle the rest. You can also recycle just the top if the bottom is unsalvageable. You can always wash and compost the box as well.

Also be on the lookout for adhesives that may be on the pizza box such as coupons, stickers and the like. These are also contaminants called PSAs or "pressure sensitive adhesives" that need to be removed before recycling.

The recycling industry says such contamination causes losses of about \$700 million per year industry-wide.

Now that's a lot of pizza pies.

Bottoms Up

Drinking on the job is getting greener thanks to a number of compostable and recyclable cups hitting mainstream supermarket shelves and office supply companies.

When considering that the average office worker throws away three cups a day or 600 per year according to [Earth911](#), recycling makes more and more sense. And just think, you can take down the kitchen office posters that no one pays any attention to that say things like, "Your Mother Doesn't Work Here. Please Clean Up After Yourself," or "Frank is Not Your Fairy Godmother. Do Your Own Damn Dishes."



If you can't rotate dish washing duty in the office, speak to your office manager today about ordering recyclable coffee cups. The earth will thank you for it.

Photo cap: GPTF student supporter Timothy Montalvo drinks from a recyclable cup during our last meeting.

Hello?



Did you know you can opt out of receiving phone books as well? If you live in New York, simply call 1- 800-888-8448. The GPTF did this and was put on hold for 6:18 minutes. Once answered, our call was handled professionally and politely.

In the meantime, remember that phone books are recyclable.

The Next GPTF Meeting is Wed., August 5 at 6:30



This eblast is provided by the Yonkers City Council's Green Policy Task Force. The Task Force meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. on the 4th floor of City Hall. If you know of others in the environmental community who would like to receive this news or attend meetings, please email laura.fahrenthold@yonkersny.gov

From: Council President Chuck Lesnick with Chairman Bob Walters and Coordinator Laura Fahrenthold; District 1 Councilmember Pat McDow with Margaret Setterholm; District 2 Majority Leader Sandy Annabi with Nortrud Spero; District 3 Councilmember Joan Gronowski with Loretta Miraglia; District 4 Minority Leader Liam J. McLaughlin with Terry Joshi; District 5 Councilmember John Murtagh with Molly Roffman; District 6 Councilmember Dee Barbato with Mel Goldstein; Administration's Appointee Joe D'Lando.

Written by Laura Fahrenthold

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